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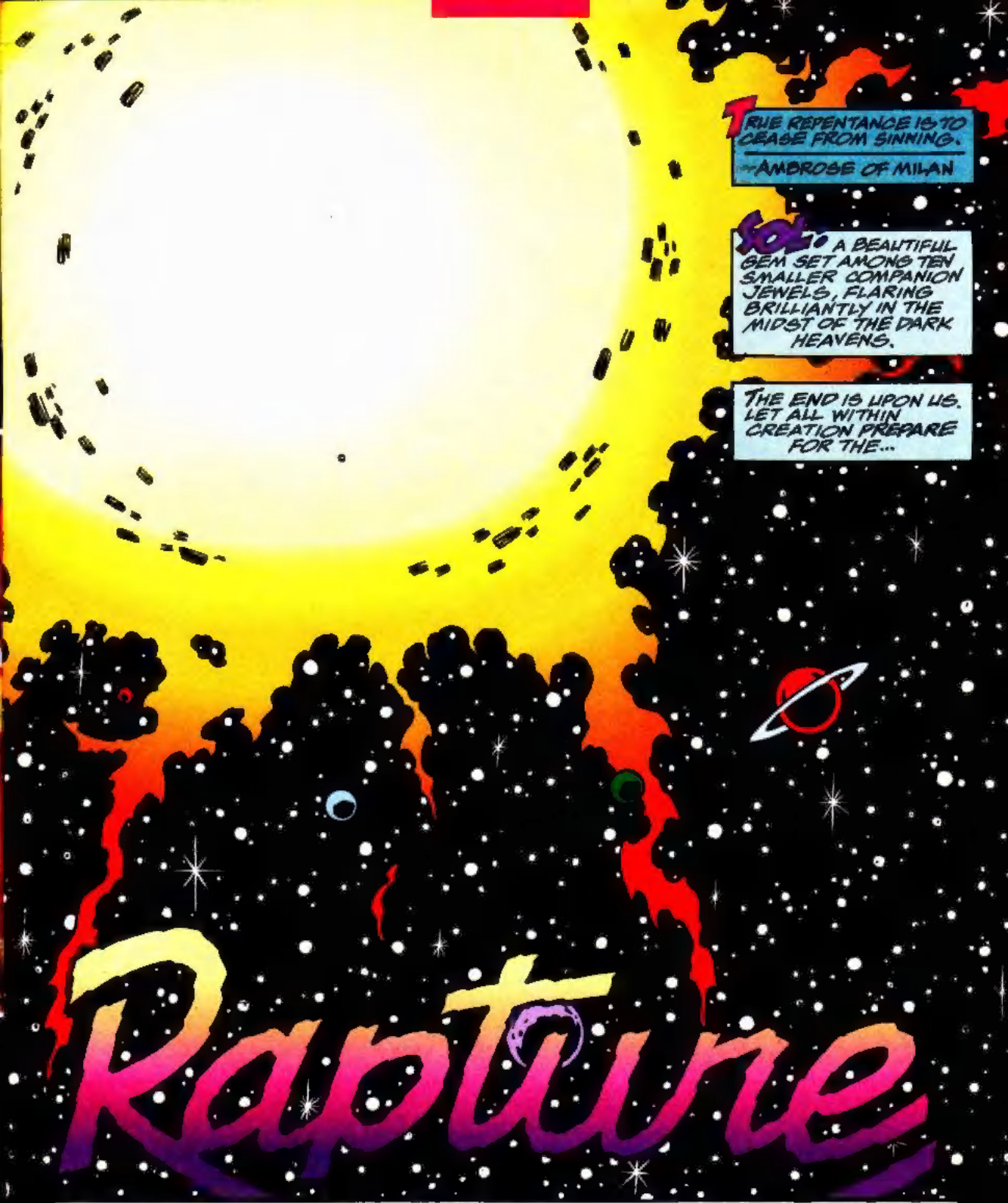
TRUE REPENTANCE IS TO CEASE FROM SINNING.
—AMBROSE OF MILAN
SOL: A BEAUTIFUL GEM SET AMONG TEN SMALLER COMPANION JEWELS, FLARING BRILLIANTLY IN THE MIDST OF THE DARK HEAVENS.
THE END IS UPON US. LET ALL WITHIN CREATION PREPARE FOR THE...
Rapture

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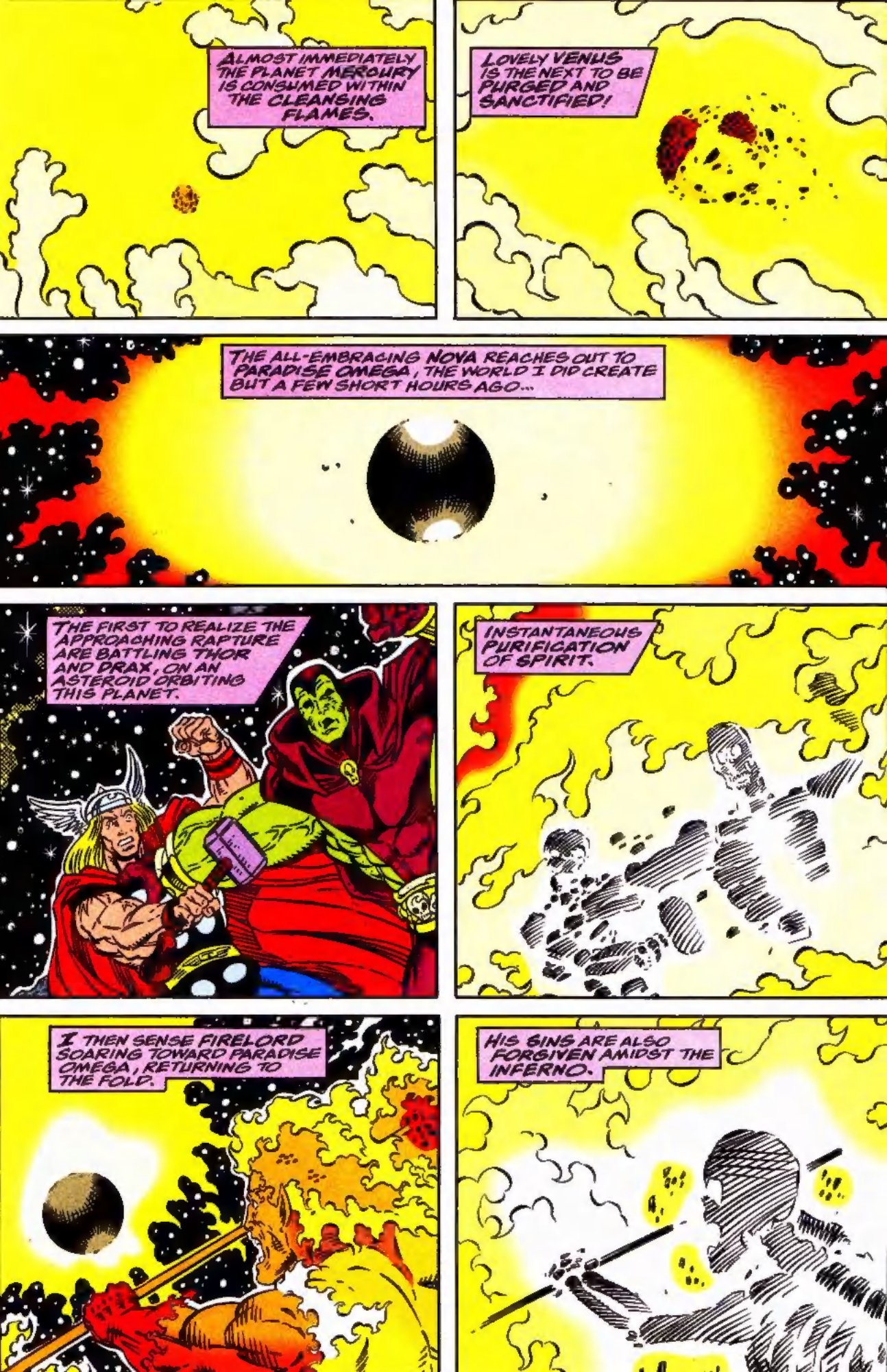
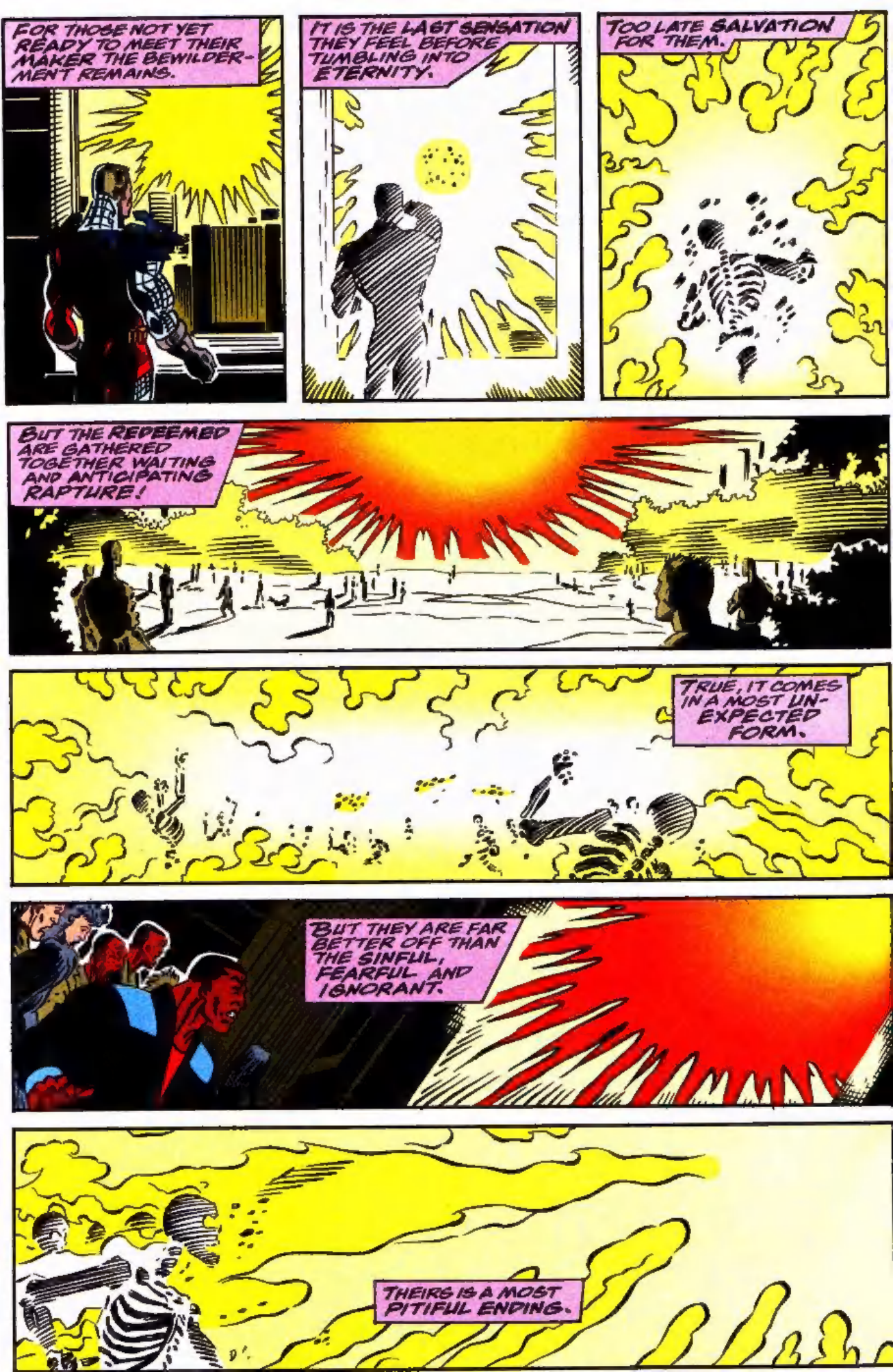
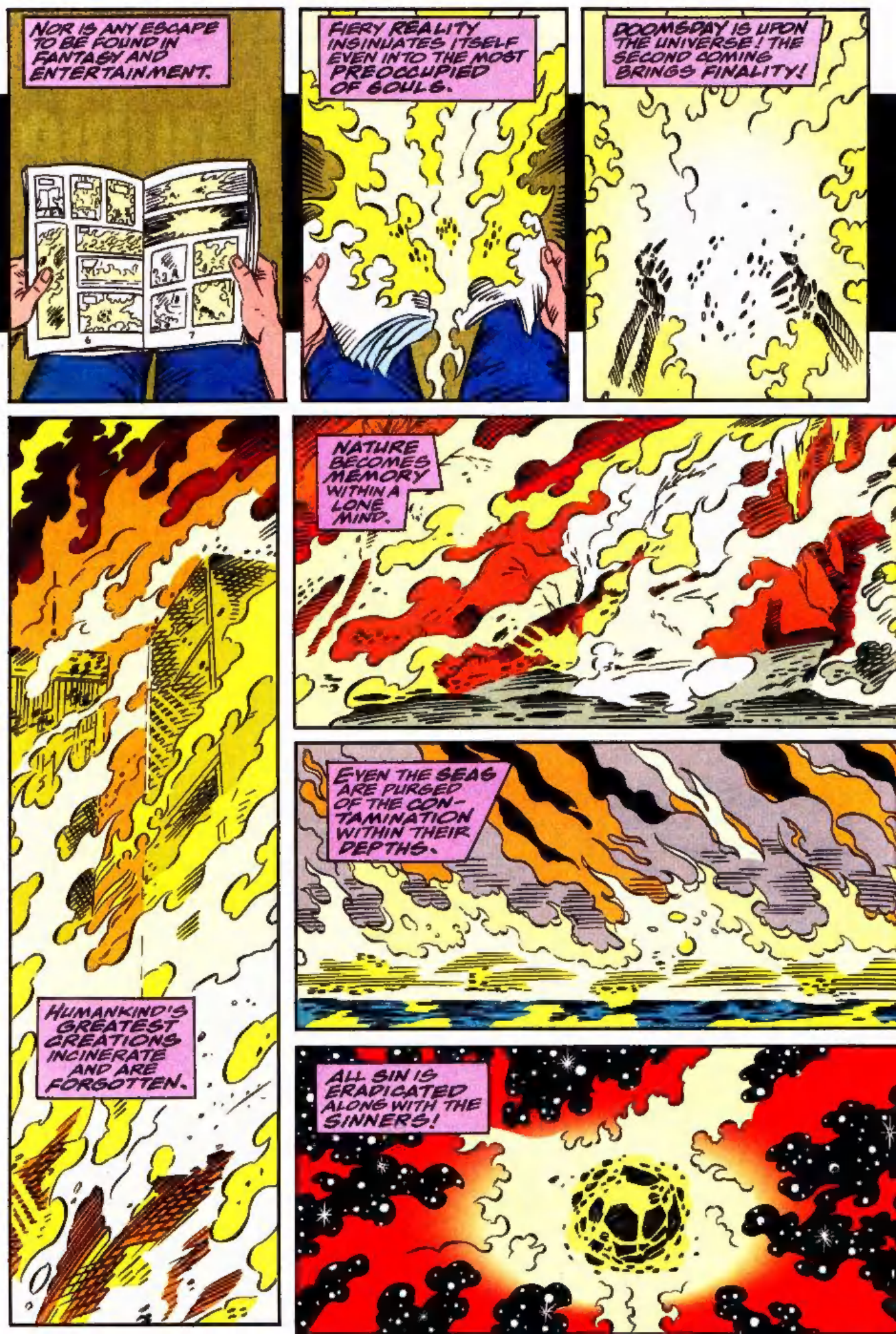

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THE PLANET MERCURY IS CONSUMED WITHIN THE CLEANSING FLAMES.
LOVELY VENUS IS THE NEXT TO BE PURGED AND SANCTIFIED!
THE ALL-EMBRACING NOVA REACHES OUT TO PARADISE OMEGA, THE WORLD I DID CREATE BUT A FEW SHORT HOURS AGO...
THE FIRST TO REALIZE THE APPROACHING RAPTURE ARE BATTLING THOR AND DRAX, ON AN ASTEROID ORBITING THIS PLANET.
INSTANTANEOUS PURIFICATION OF SPIRIT.
I THEN SENSE FIRELORD SOARING TOWARD PARADISE OMEGA, RETURNING TO THE FOLD.
HIS SINS ARE ALSO FORGIVEN AMIDST THE INFERNO.

ABSOLUTION AND DESTRUCTION BLAZE IN A MERCILESS SKY.
COMBATANTS SUCH AS WOLVERINE, GAMORA, AND THE MYSTERIOUS MAXAM CEASE THEIR STRUGGLES AND GAZE HEAVENWARD.
THEIR CARES DISAPPEAR WITHIN SACRED FLAME.
INFIDELS SUCH AS IRON MAN STAND SIDE BY SIDE WITH QUICKSILVER, AURORA AND STORM, TRUE BELIEVERS.
ALL ARE BLESSED AND FORGIVEN.
THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THIS DIVINE EDICT, NOT EVEN IN THE SUB-TERRANEAN DEPTHS OF MY PRIVATE SANCTUARY.

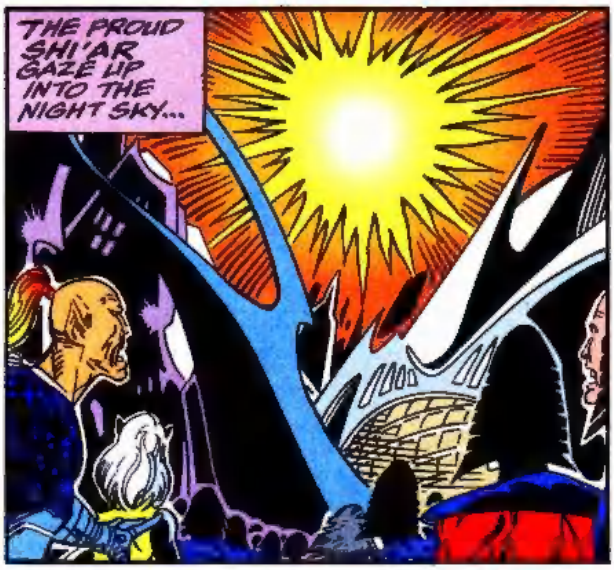
EVEN EVIL AND ANNOYINGLY PERSISTENT THANOS MUST FACE HOLY JUDGMENT THIS DAY.
HE IS ENGULFED IN RAPTURE WITH PROFESSOR X, DEGENERATE PIP AND TRUSTING SILHOUETTE.
ALL OF PARADISE OMEGA IS CONSIGNED TO THE HOLY FIRE.
NEXT STOP FOR THE DIVINE IS WARLOCK'S BIRTH WORLD, EARTH.
THE INITIAL RESPONSE TO SPOTTING CELESTIAL GRANDEUR AT THE FRONT DOOR IS ALWAYS CONFUSION.
IS IT IN THE WITNESS'S IMAGINATION OR IS THE SUN ACTUALLY GROWING LARGER?

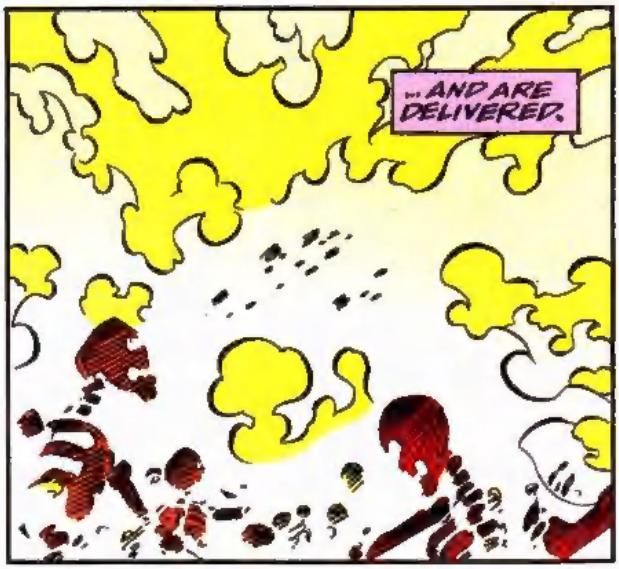

FOR THOSE NOT YET READY TO MEET THEIR MAKER THE BEWILDERMENT REMAINS.
IT IS THE LAST SENSATION THEY FEEL BEFORE TUMBLING INTO ETERNITY.
TOO LATE SALVATION FOR THEM.
BUT THE REDEEMED ARE GATHERED TOGETHER WAITING AND ANTICIPATING RAPTURE!
TRUE, IT COMES IN A MOST UNEXPECTED FORM.
BUT THEY ARE FAR BETTER OFF THAN THE SINFUL, FEARFUL AND IGNORANT.
THEIRS IS A MOST PITIFUL ENDING.

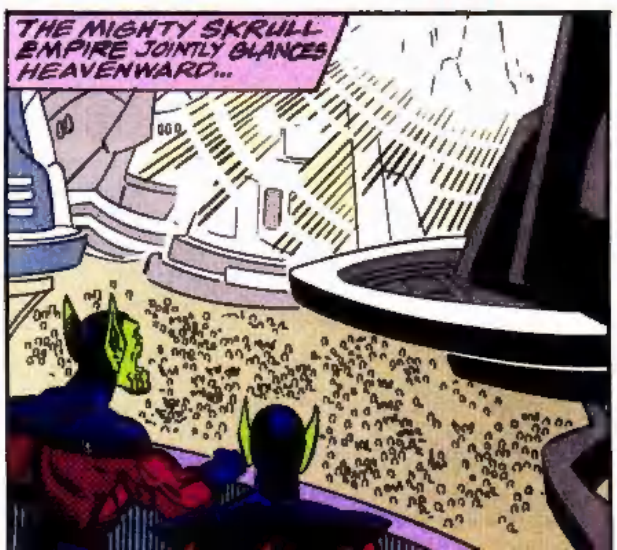

NOR IS ANY ESCAPE TO BE FOUND IN FANTASY AND ENTERTAINMENT.
FIERY REALITY INSINUATES ITSELF EVEN INTO THE MOST PREOCCUPIED OF SOULS.
DOOMSDAY IS UPON THE UNIVERSE! THE SECOND COMING BRINGS FINALITY!
NATURE BECOMES MEMORY WITHIN A LONE MIND.
EVEN THE SEAS ARE PURGED OF THE CONTAMINATION WITHIN THEIR DEPTHS.
HUMANKIND'S GREATEST CREATIONS INCINERATE AND ARE FORGOTTEN.
ALL SIN IS ERADICATED ALONG WITH THE SINNERS!

BUT THE SACRED WORD IS NOT RESTRICTED TO MERELY THIS STAR SYSTEM.

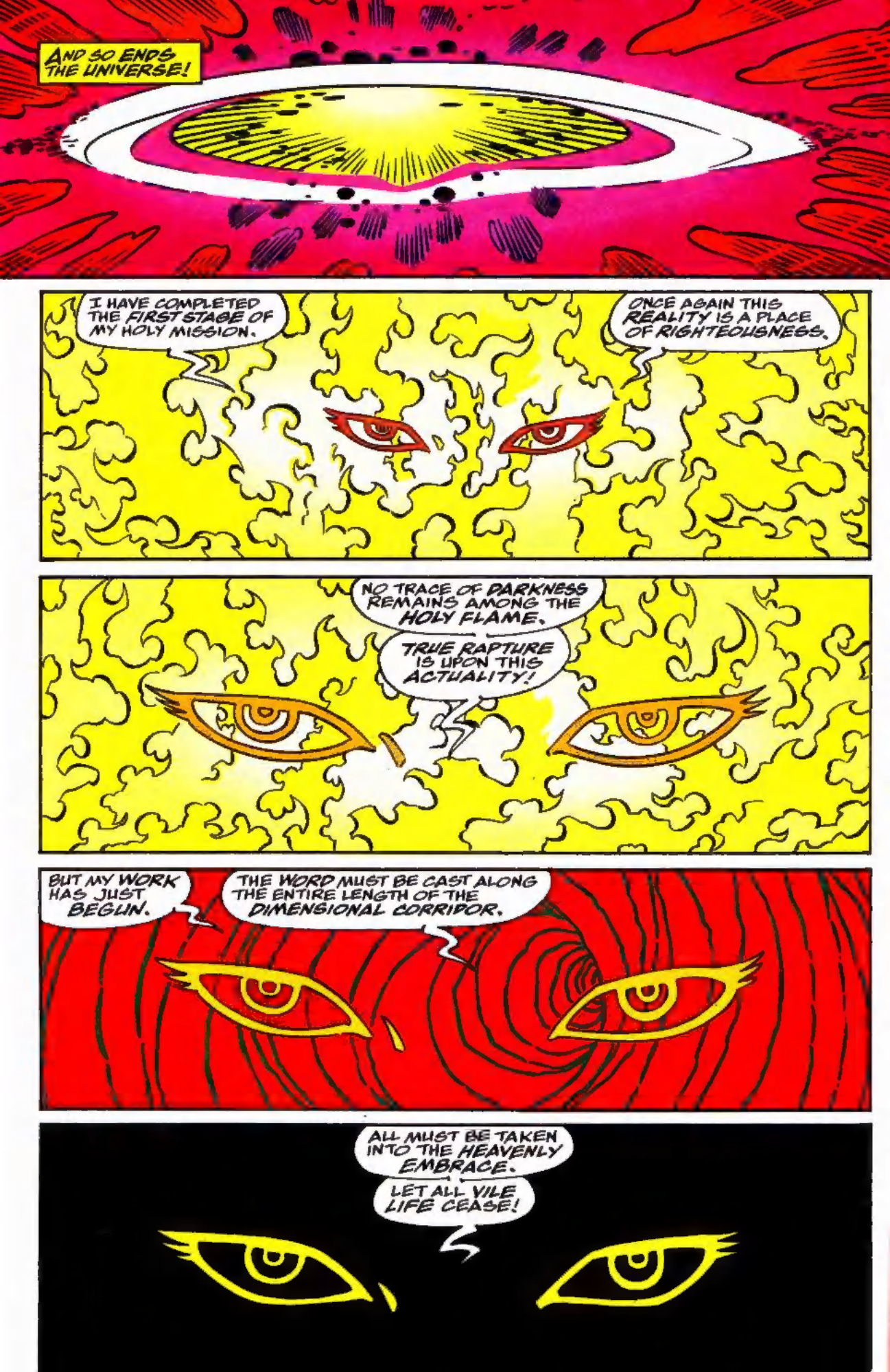
ACROSS THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE MILKY WAY GALAXY THE RAPTURE SPREADS.


THE PROUD SHI'AR GAZE UP INTO THE NIGHT SKY...

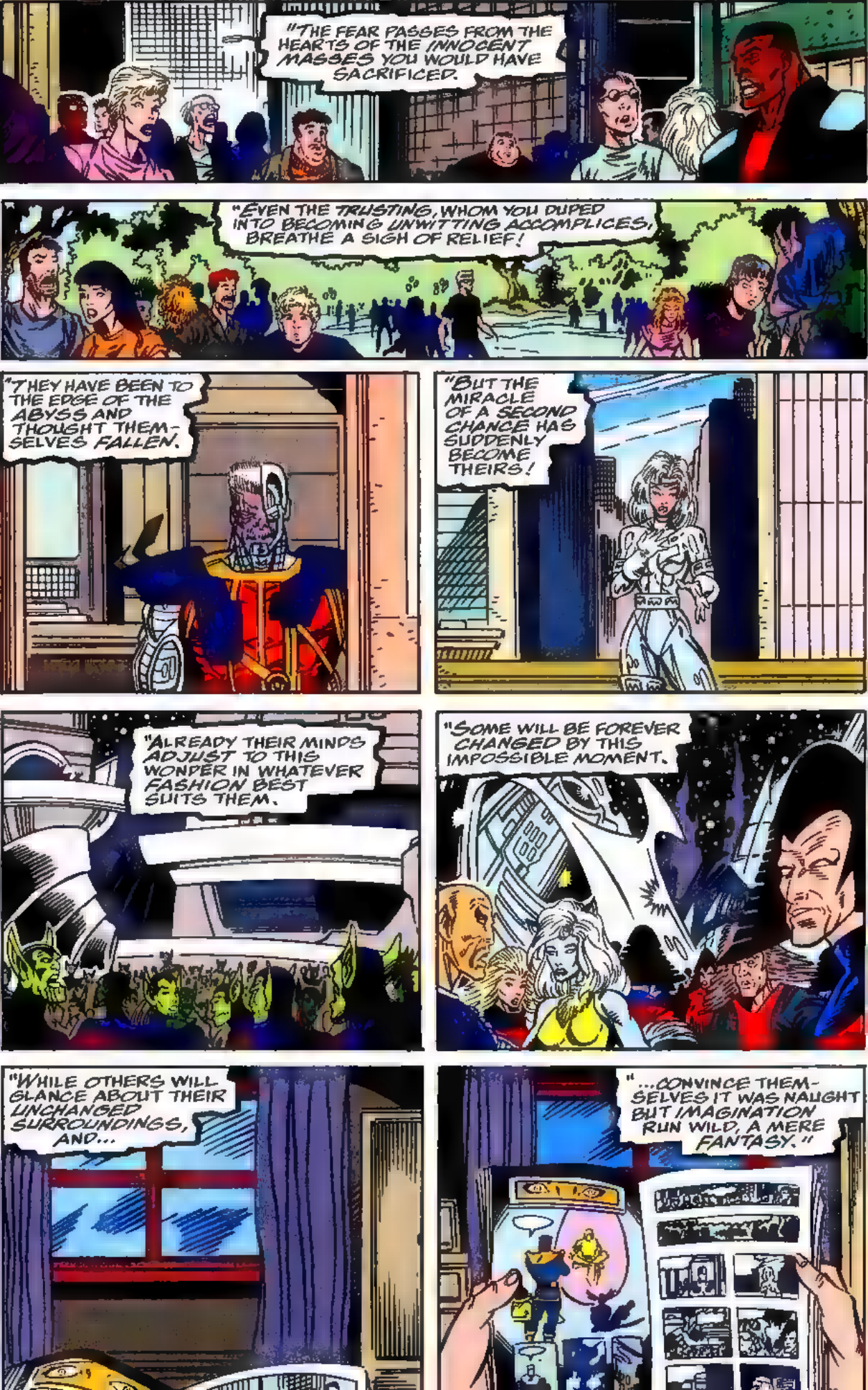

...AND ARE DELIVERED.

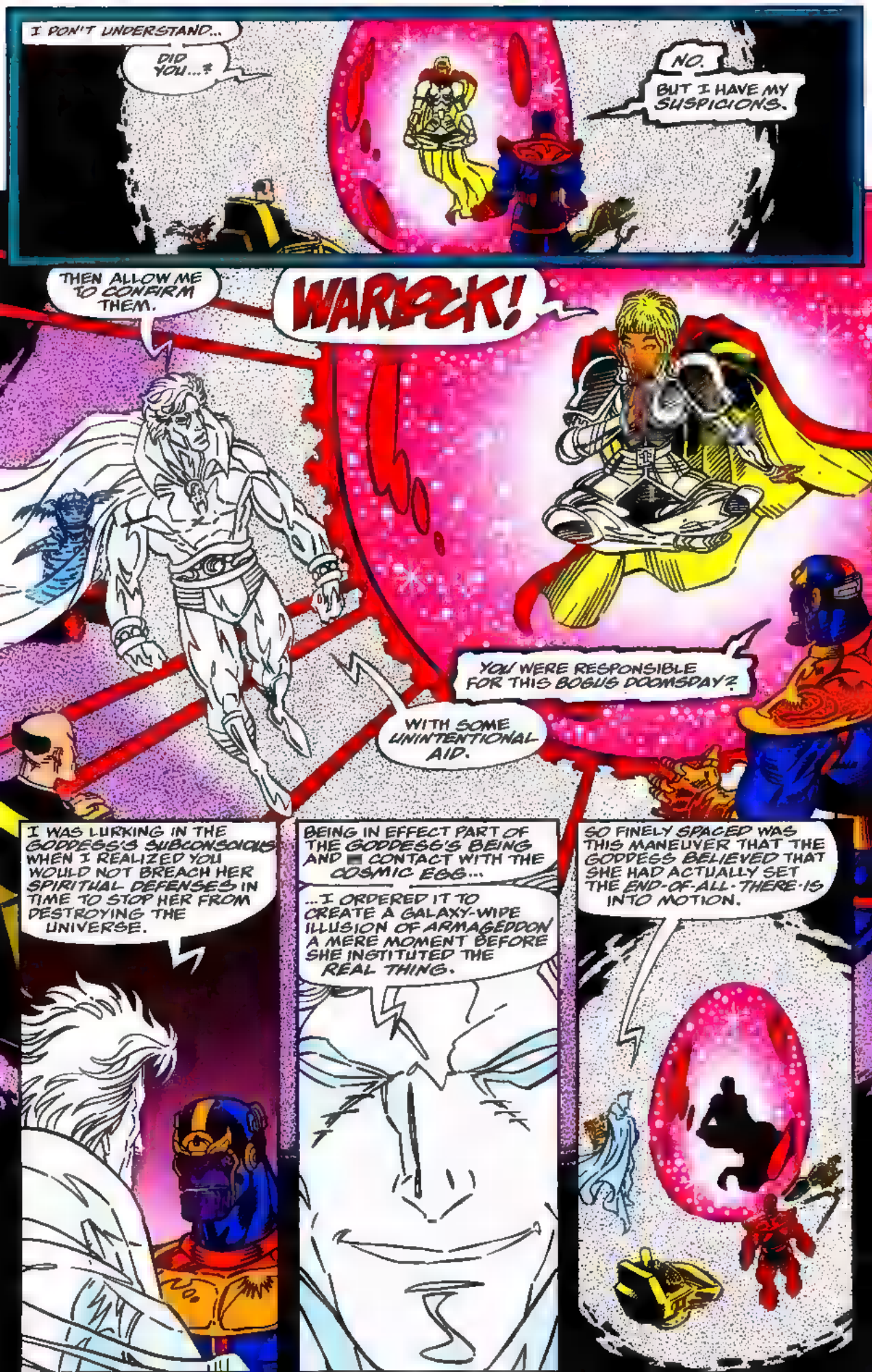

THE MIGHTY SKRULL EMPIRE JOINTLY GLANCES HEAVENWARD...

...AND EXPERIENCES THE SERAPHIC.


AND SO ENDS THE UNIVERSE!
I HAVE COMPLETED THE FIRST STAGE OF MY HOLY MISSION.
ONCE AGAIN THIS REALITY IS A PLACE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.
NO TRACE OF DARKNESS REMAINS AMONG THE HOLY FLAME.
TRUE RAPTURE IS UPON THIS ACTUALITY!
BUT MY WORK HAS JUST BEGUN.
THE WORD MUST BE CAST ALONG THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE DIMENSIONAL CORRIDOR.
ALL MUST BE TAKEN INTO THE HEAVENLY EMBRACE.
LET ALL VILE LIFE CEASE!

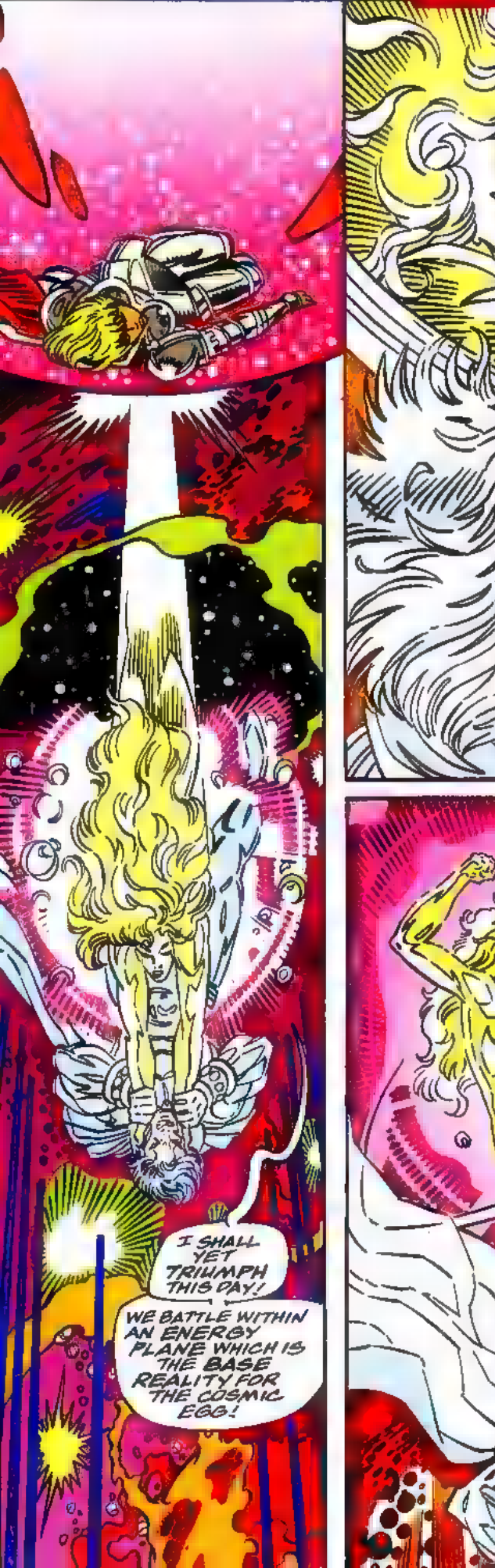
LET ALL THAT IS HOLY ONCE AGAIN...
THIS CANNOT BE!
BUT IT IS, GODDESS!
REPORTS OF THE DEMISE OF THIS UNIVERSE HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED.
MMMPPH!
"THE RECENTLY DECEASED OPEN THEIR EYES IN DUMBFOUNDED AMAZEMENT!
"THEY STAGGER FROM THE REALIZATION THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SAVED FROM A FATE THAT NEVER WAS.
"BELIEVER AND INFIDEL ALIKE FIND REDEMPTION OF A SORT YOU NEVER DREAMT OF."

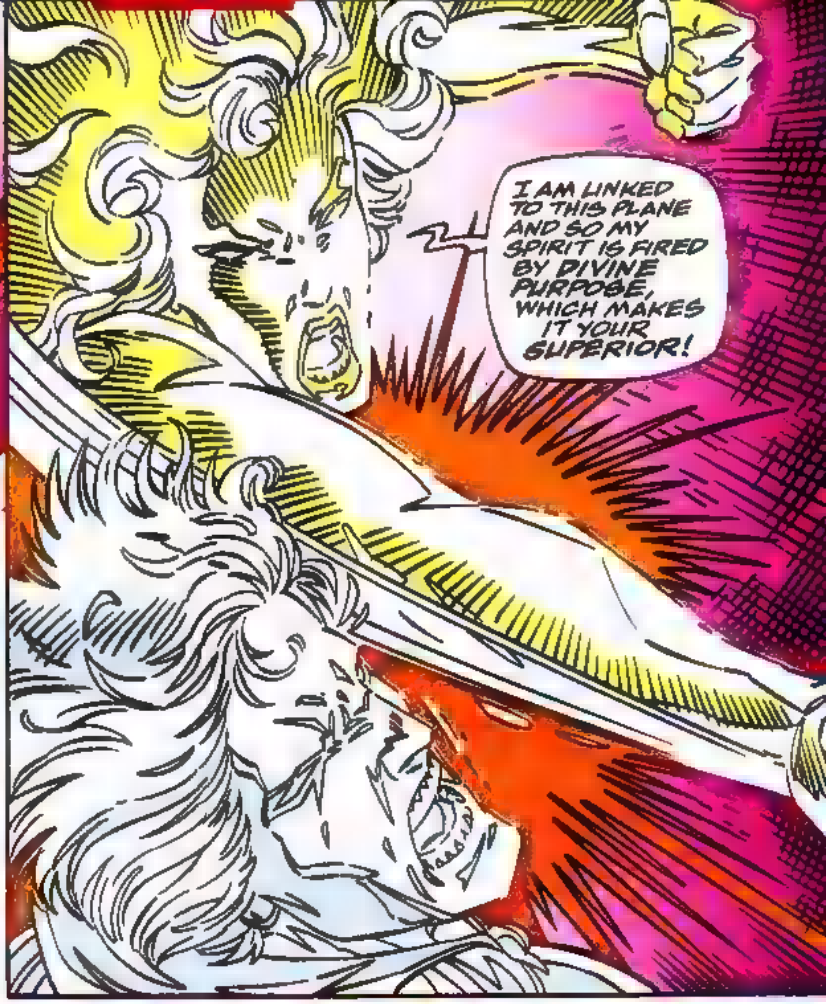

"THE FEAR PASSES FROM THE HEARTS OF THE INNOCENT MASSES YOU WOULD HAVE SACRIFICED.
"EVEN THE TRUSTING, WHOM YOU DUPED INTO BECOMING UNWITTING ACCOMPLICES, BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF!
"THEY HAVE BEEN TO THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS AND THOUGHT THEMSELVES FALLEN.
"BUT THE MIRACLE OF A SECOND CHANCE HAS SUDDENLY BECOME THEIRS!
"ALREADY THEIR MINDS ADJUST TO THIS WONDER IN WHATEVER FASHION BEST SUITS THEM.
"SOME WILL BE FOREVER CHANGED BY THIS IMPOSSIBLE MOMENT.
"WHILE OTHERS WILL GLANCE ABOUT THEIR UNCHANGED SURROUNDINGS, AND...
"...CONVINCE THEMSELVES IT WAS NAUGHT BUT IMAGINATION RUN WILD, A MERE FANTASY."

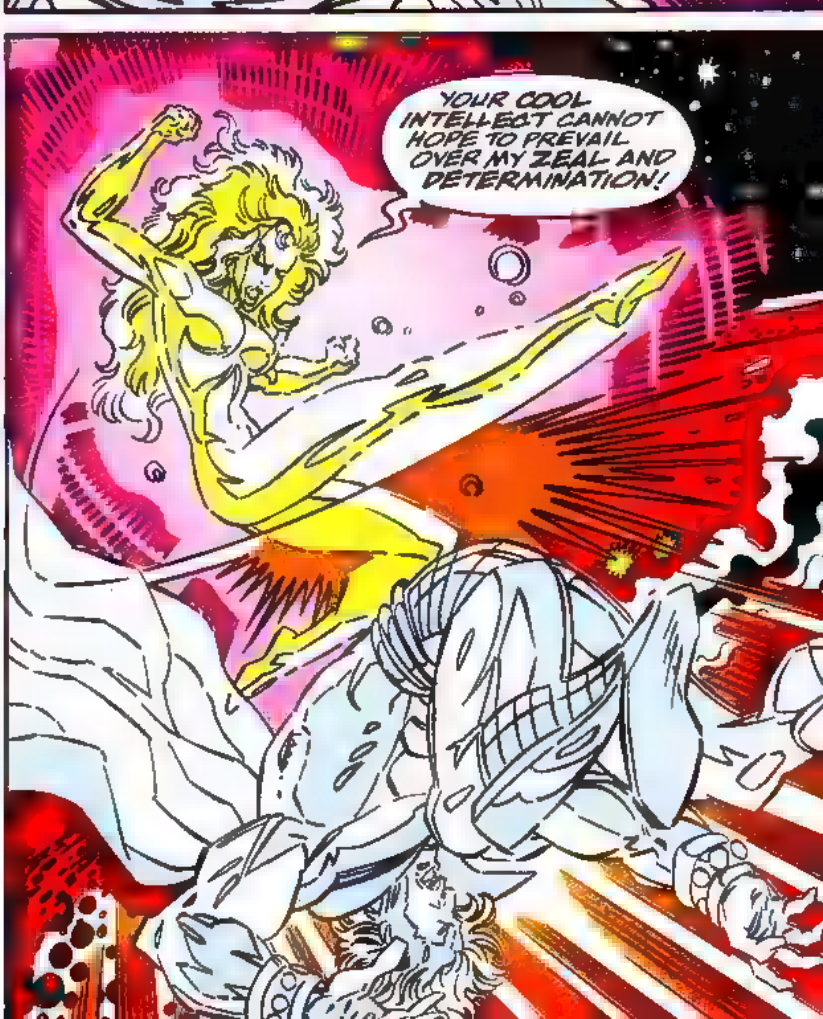

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
DID YOU...?
NO.
BUT I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS.
THEN ALLOW ME TO CONFIRM THEM.
WARLOCK!
YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS BOGUS DOOMSDAY?
WITH SOME UNINTENTIONAL AID.
I WAS LURKING IN THE GODDESS'S SUBCONSCIOUS WHEN I REALIZED YOU WOULD NOT BREACH HER SPIRITUAL DEFENSES IN TIME TO STOP HER FROM DESTROYING THE UNIVERSE.
BEING IN EFFECT PART OF THE GODDESS'S BEING AND ■ CONTACT WITH THE COSMIC EGG...
...I ORDERED IT TO CREATE A GALAXY-WIDE ILLUSION OF ARMAGEDDON A MERE MOMENT BEFORE SHE INSTITUTED THE REAL THING.
SO FINELY SPACED WAS THIS MANEUVER THAT THE GODDESS BELIEVED THAT SHE HAD ACTUALLY SET THE END-OF-ALL-THERE-IS INTO MOTION.

SO THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE EXPERIENCED ITS OWN DEATH WITHOUT ACTUALLY HAVING TO SUFFER IT.
I HAVE SEVERELY UNDERESTIMATED YOU, WARLOCK-
YOU AND MANY OTHERS IN THE PAST.
BUT IN THE LONG RUN IT MATTERS NOT.
I STILL RETAIN THE GREAT POWER AND WILL YET CREATE RAPTURE!
YOU FORGET, GODDESS, THAT INFIDEL AND BELIEVER ALIKE NOW REALIZE YOUR SUICIDAL INTENT!
YOU HAVE NO HOPE OF GENERATING THE UNIVERSAL WILL TO OVERRIDE THE EGG'S BUILT-IN INHIBITIONS CONCERNING GALACTIC SELF-DESTRUCTION.
TRUE. AN IMMEDIATE AND TOTAL PURGE IS NOW BEYOND MY GRASP...
...BUT WITH THE COSMIC EGG IN MY EMPLOY I SHALL MERELY ACCOMPLISH THE SAME GOAL IN CAREFULLY PLANNED STAGES INSTEAD.
NOT IF THANOS AND I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT!
I STAND READY TO ACT, WARLOCK!

SINFUL ADAM! LET YOU BE THE FIRST TO PERISH!
IMPOSSIBLE!
A SHORTCOMING OF THE COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNITS, AS COMPARED TO THE JOINED INFINITY GEMS, IS THE FACT THAT THEY CANNOT AFFECT THE SOUL!
AND THAT IS WHAT I CURRENTLY AM, GODDESS, PURE SPIRIT!
THEN THAT IS HOW I SHALL DEAL WITH YOU!
THIS BODY WAS NEVER MORE THAN A SHELL THROUGH WHICH TO DEAL WITH CORPOREAL REALITY!

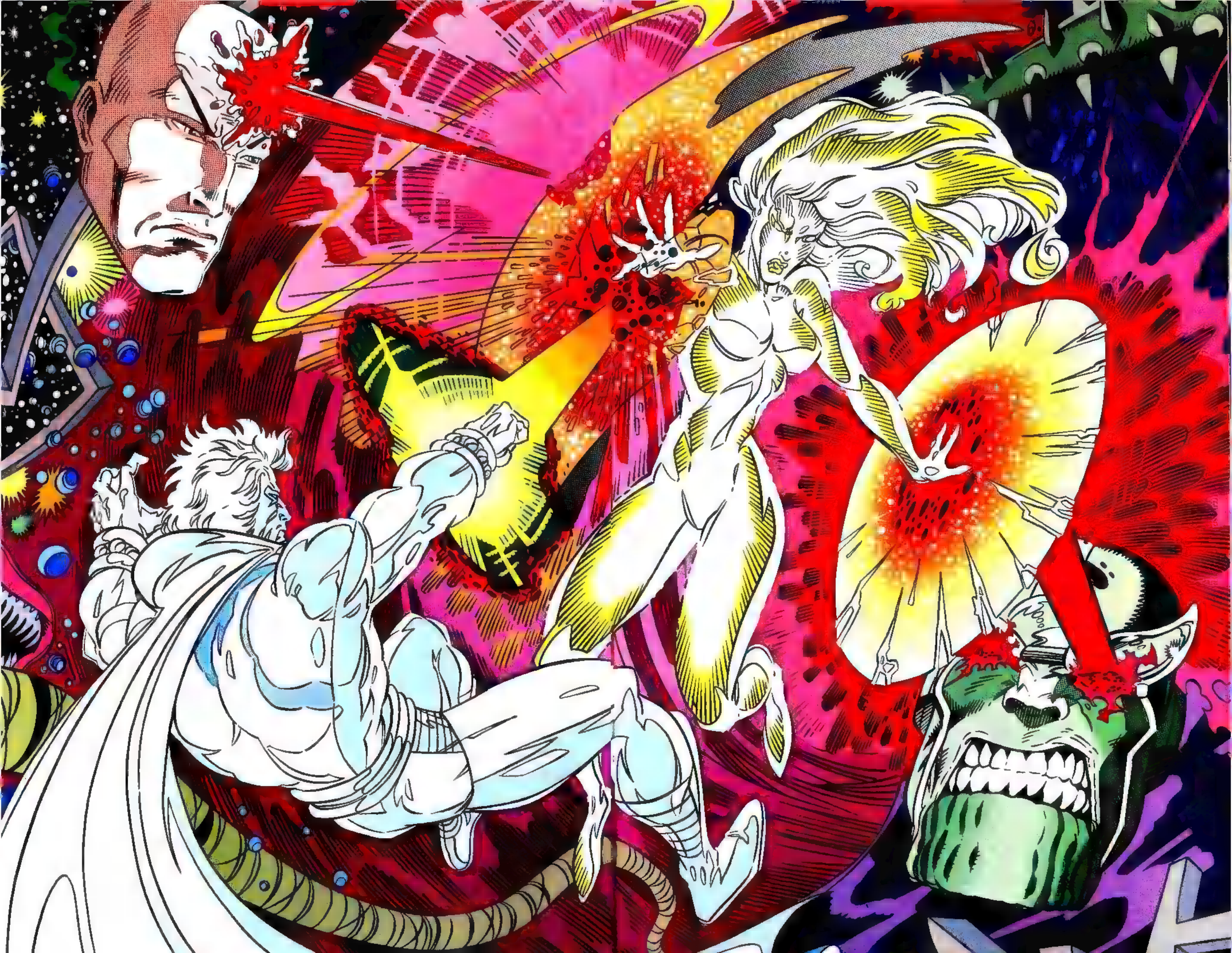

I SHALL YET TRIUMPH THIS DAY!
WE BATTLE WITHIN AN ENERGY PLANE WHICH IS THE BASE REALITY FOR THE COSMIC EGG!


I AM LINKED TO THIS PLANE AND SO MY SPIRIT IS FIRED BY DIVINE PURPOSE, WHICH MAKES IT YOUR SUPERIOR!


YOUR COOL INTELLECT CANNOT HOPE TO PREVAIL OVER MY ZEAL AND DETERMINATION!

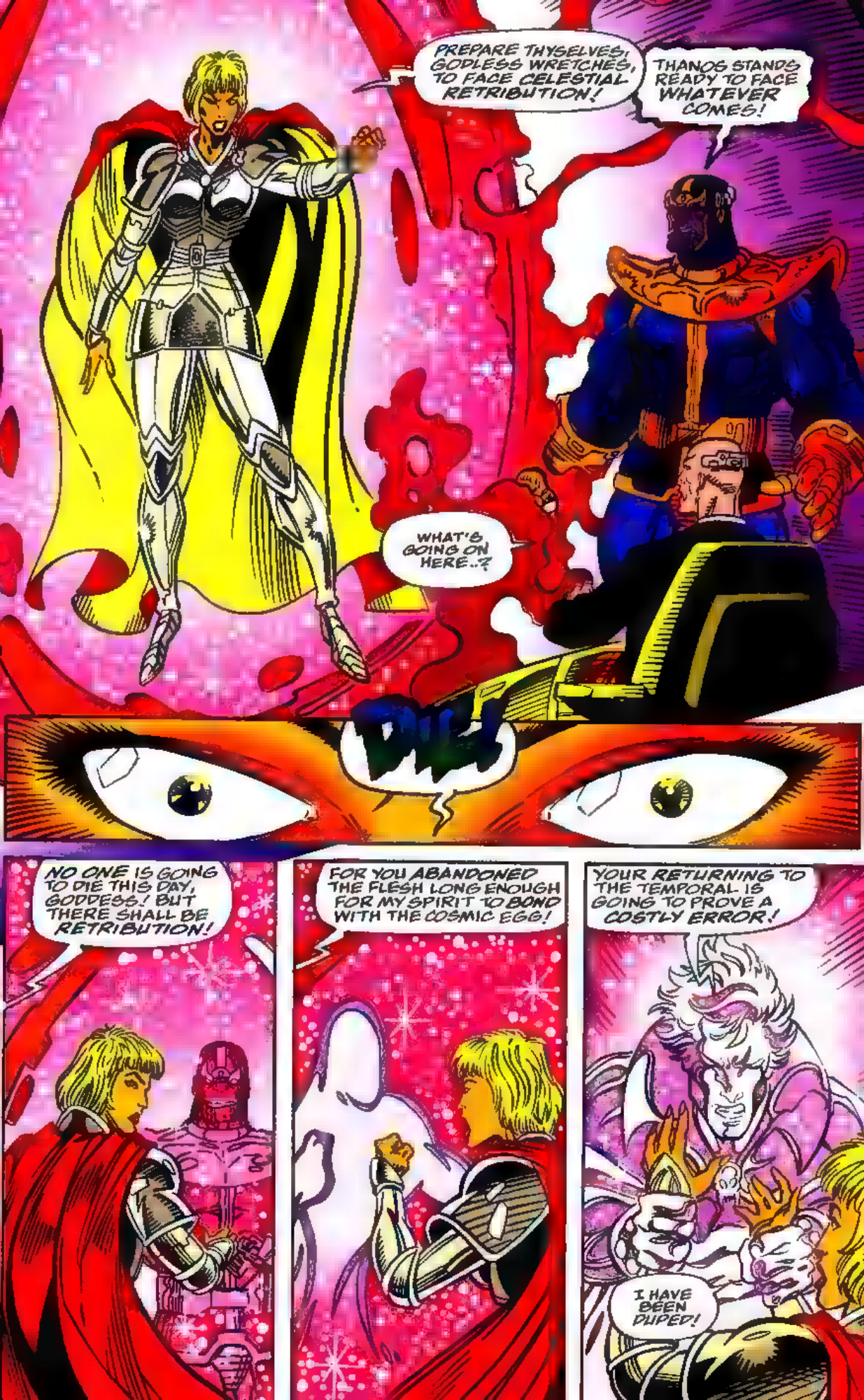
YOUR ATTEMPTS TO THWART MY SAVING THE UNIVERSE FROM ITSELF MUST FAIL!
AND THEY WOULD...
...IF I FOUGHT ALONE!
SPIRITUAL AND MENTAL PROJECTIONS OF--
THANOS AND PROF. X!

ON A DIFFERENT PLANE THIS WOULD INDEED BE DISTURBING NEWS, WARLOCK.
BUT IT MATTERS LITTLE IN THIS REALM!
FOR [redacted] STRUGGLE WITHIN CONFINES MARRIED TO MY SPIRIT!
HERE I AM SUPREME!

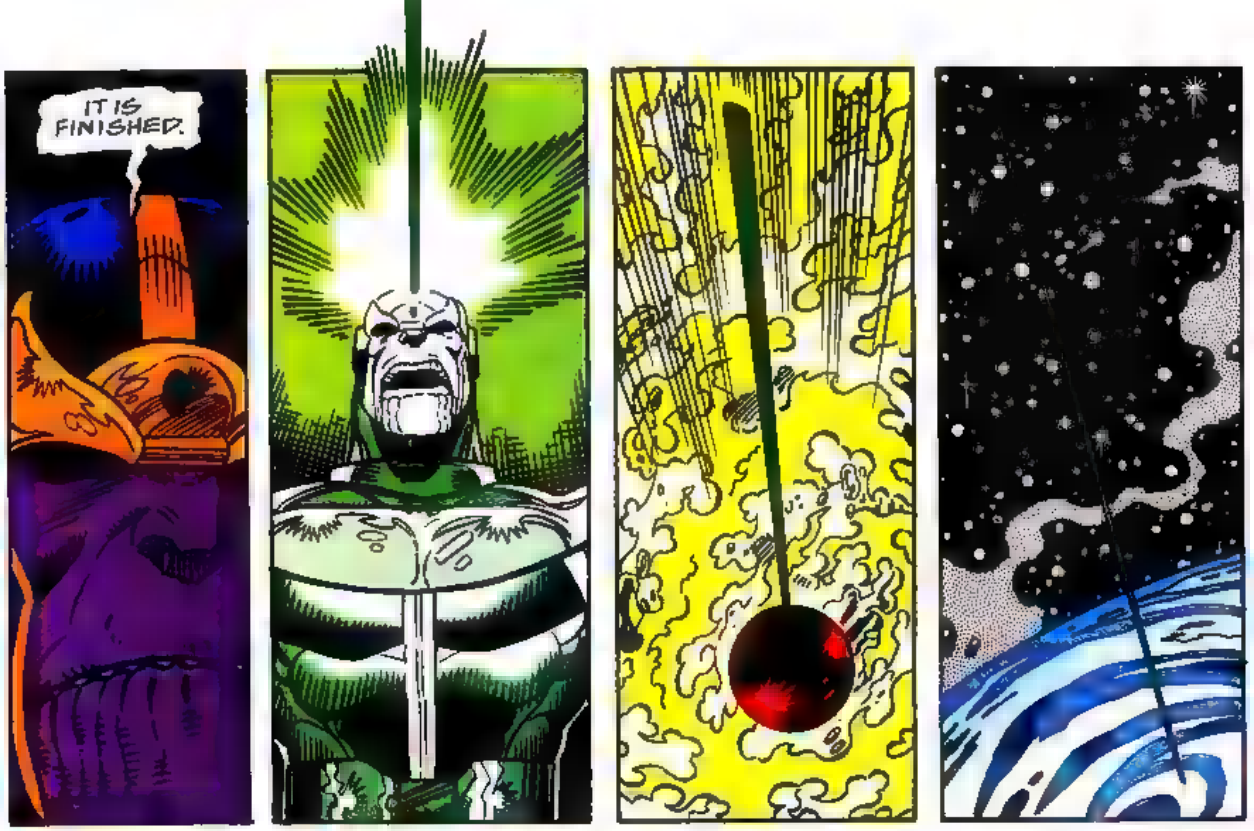


NO!
SURRENDER, GODDESS! YOU ARE BUT A PARTIAL SOUL PITTED AGAINST THREE POWERFUL AND WHOLE SPIRITS!
PLEASE... NO MORE... GIVE UP...
LET US PUT AN END TO THIS MADNESS AS MERCIFULLY AS WE CAN.
FOOL!

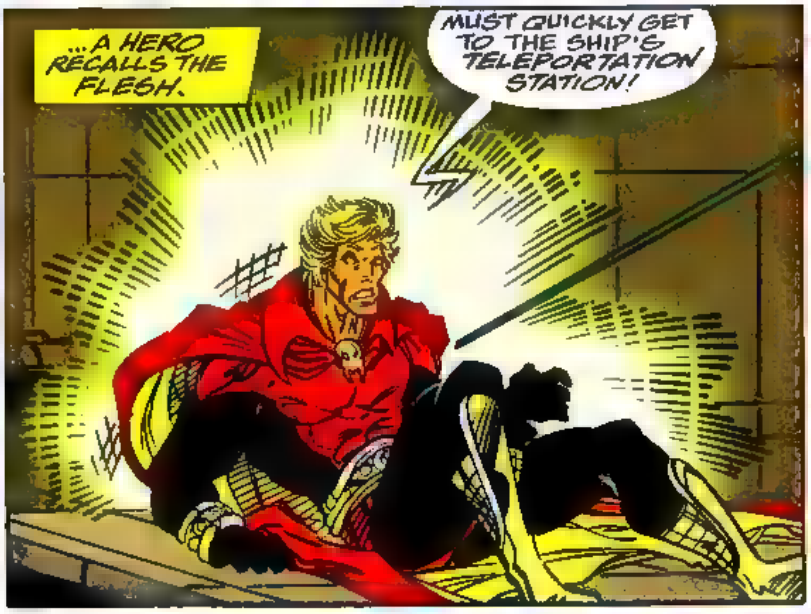
SHE'S TRYING TO GET BACK TO THE EGG!
STOP HER!
IF SHE SETS THE CONFLICT BACK ON A PHYSICAL LEVEL WE ARE LOST!
TOO LATE, FOOLISH SINNERS!
JUSTICE AGAIN TRIUMPHS!
LET EVIL REAP ITS RIGHTEOUS REWARD!


PREPARE THYSELVES, GODLESS WRETCHES, TO FACE CELESTIAL RETRIBUTION!
THANOS STANDS READY TO FACE WHATEVER COMES!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE..?
BLAM
NO ONE IS GOING TO DIE THIS DAY, GODDESS! BUT THERE SHALL BE RETRIBUTION!
FOR YOU ABANDONED THE FLESH LONG ENOUGH FOR MY SPIRIT TO BOND WITH THE COSMIC EGG!
YOUR RETURNING TO THE TEMPORAL IS GOING TO PROVE A COSTLY ERROR!
I HAVE BEEN DUPED!

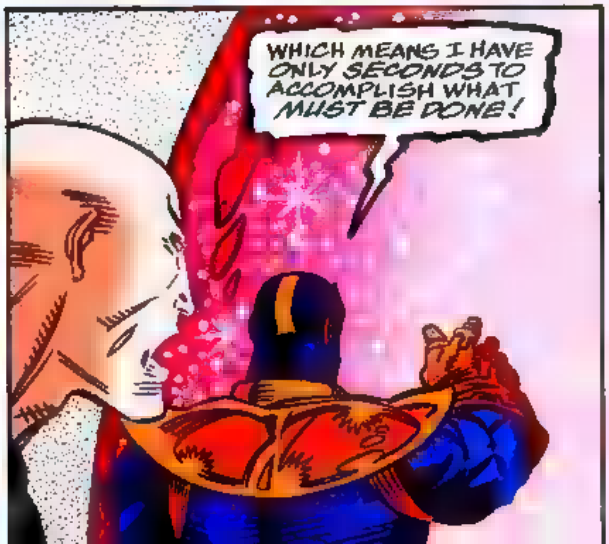
THANOS, NOW!

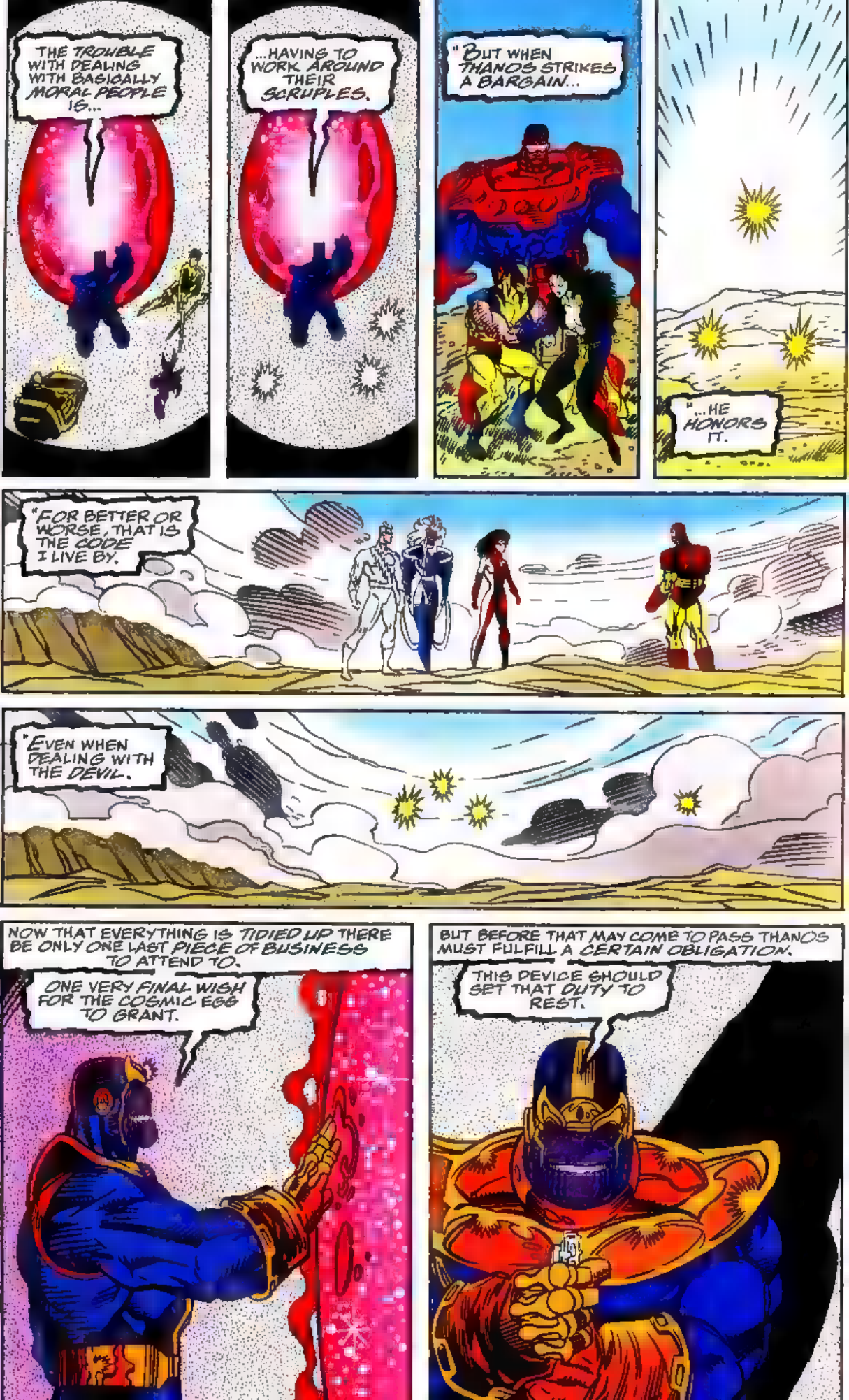

IT IS FINISHED.

WITHIN A SPACE-CRAFT HALF A STAR SYSTEM AWAY...

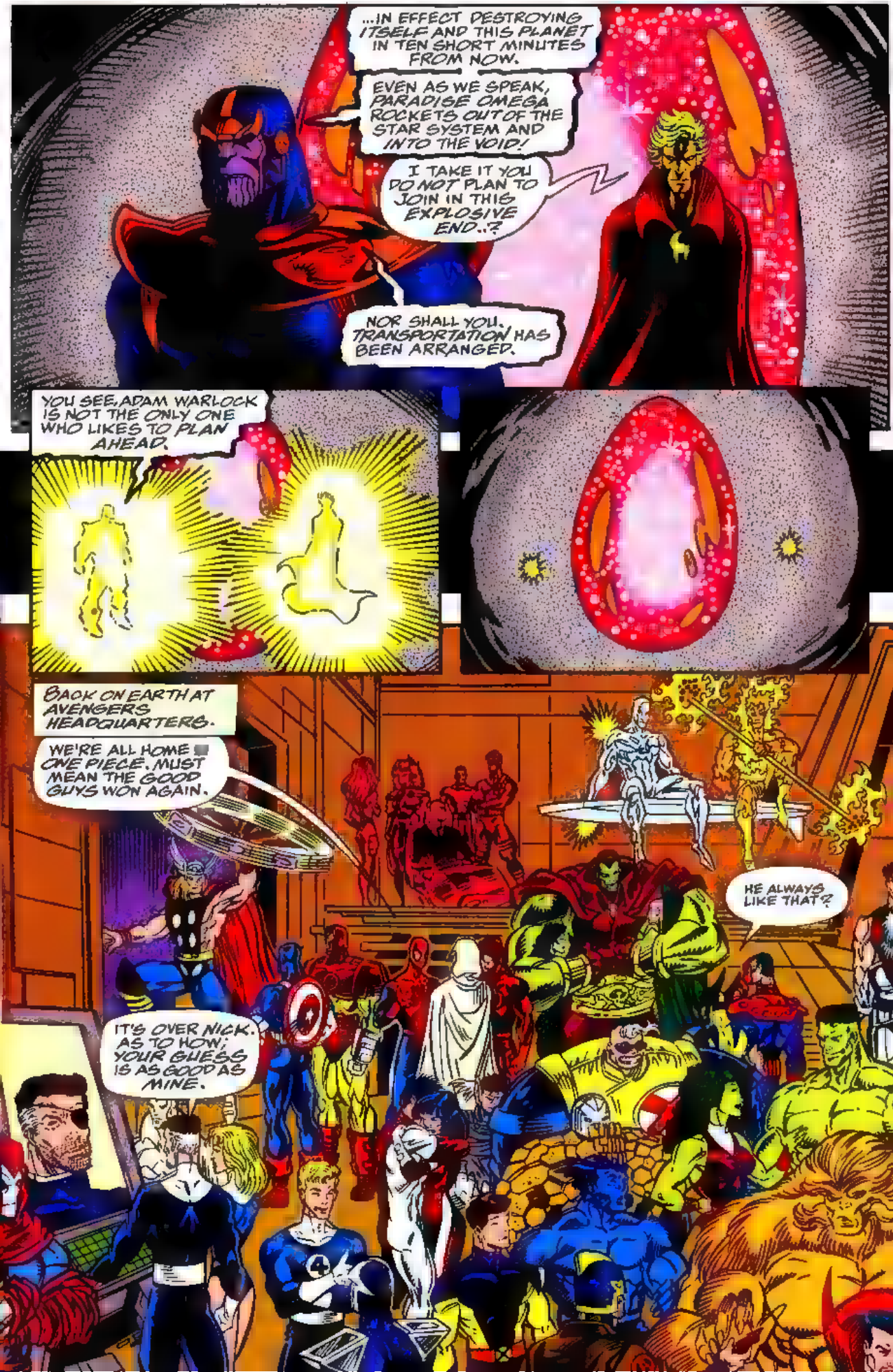

...A HERO RECALLS THE FLESH.
MUST QUICKLY GET TO THE SHIP'S TELEPORTATION STATION!

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A PREPROGRAMMED COMMAND WARLOCK SET BEFORE ALLOWING ME TO SEND HIS SPIRIT OFF TO SOUL WORLD.
CLEVER.


WHICH MEANS I HAVE ONLY SECONDS TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT MUST BE DONE!


THE TROUBLE WITH DEALING WITH BASICALLY MORAL PEOPLE IS...
...HAVING TO WORK AROUND THEIR SCRUPLES.
"BUT WHEN THANOS STRIKES A BARGAIN...
"...HE HONORS IT.
"FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THAT IS THE CODE I LIVE BY.
"EVEN WHEN DEALING WITH THE DEVIL.
NOW THAT EVERYTHING IS TIDIED UP THERE BE ONLY ONE LAST PIECE OF BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO.
ONE VERY FINAL WISH FOR THE COSMIC EGG TO GRANT.
BUT BEFORE THAT MAY COME TO PASS THANOS MUST FULFILL A CERTAIN OBLIGATION.
THIS DEVICE SHOULD SET THAT DUTY TO REST.

AS USUAL, MY TIMING IS INCREDIBLY PRECISE!
GREETINGS, TITAN.
WHAT?
I SEE MY SUDDEN ARRIVAL WAS NOT ANTICIPATED.
THE SOUL GEM IS ONCE AGAIN MINE!
AND BE ASSURED THAT I AM READY AND WILLING TO USE IT AGAINST EVEN AN ALLY TO INSURE THAT THE COSMIC EGG DOES NOT FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS.
MEANING MY HANDS.
STAND DOWN, WARLOCK. THERE IS NO NEED FOR US TO BATTLE.
NOT I NOR ANY OTHER WILL BE EXPLOITING THIS PARTICULAR ASTRAL WONDER.
FOR I HAVE ORDERED THE COSMIC EGG TO BREAK ITS MOLECULAR STRUCTURE DOWN...
... TO A SUB-ENERGY LEVEL...


...IN EFFECT DESTROYING ITSELF AND THIS PLANET IN TEN SHORT MINUTES FROM NOW.
EVEN AS WE SPEAK, PARADISE OMEGA ROCKETS OUT OF THE STAR SYSTEM AND INTO THE VOID!
I TAKE IT YOU DO NOT PLAN TO JOIN IN THIS EXPLOSIVE END..?
NOR SHALL YOU. TRANSPORTATION HAS BEEN ARRANGED.
YOU SEE, ADAM WARLOCK IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO LIKES TO PLAN AHEAD.
BACK ON EARTH AT AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS.
WE'RE ALL HOME ■ ONE PIECE. MUST MEAN THE GOOD GUYS WON AGAIN.
HE ALWAYS LIKE THAT?
IT'S OVER NICK. AS TO HOW; YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.

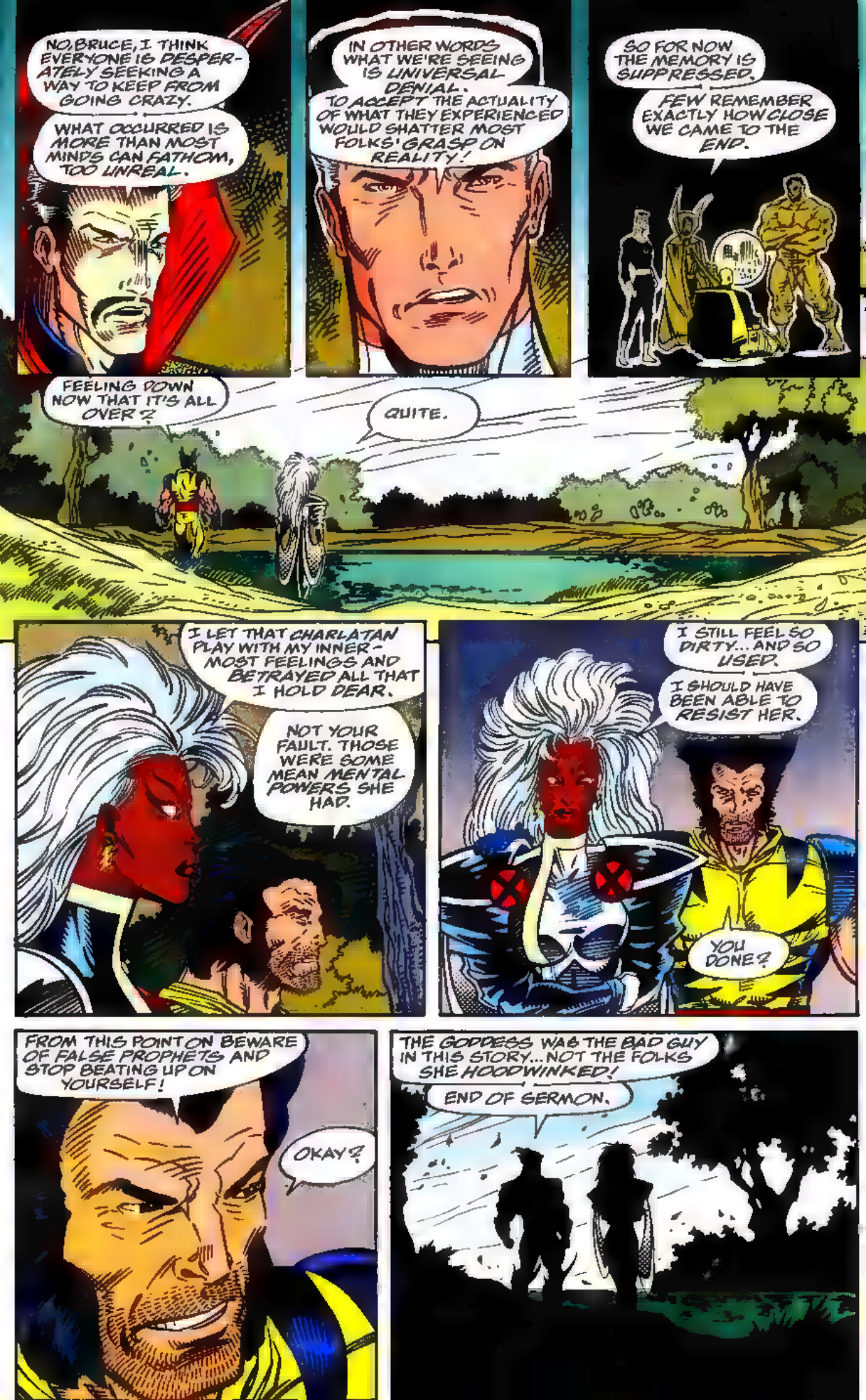
THOR SURE SEEMED TO BE IN A BIG HURRY TO GET OUT OF HERE.
HE SORT OF HAD A STRANGE LOOK IN HIS EYES, DIDN'T HE?
... AND WHEN I AWOKE, YOUR SWORD WAS LYING NEXT TO ME AND MY BACK WAS SHAVED.
EXCEEDINGLY STRANGE.
MMMPHH!
AS HARD AS IT IS TO BELIEVE, IT APPEARS THANOS HAD A HAND IN SAVING THE DAY.
WE'LL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED OUT THERE.
MMMPH!
LOOKS LIKE YOUR HEALING FACTOR'S AS GOOD AS MINE.
WHERE'D YOU GET IT..?
FROM A DOCTOR THANOS.
THREE LIGHT YEARS AWAY.
SO ENDS THE GODDESS'S HOLY REIGN AND TWISTED DREAMS.

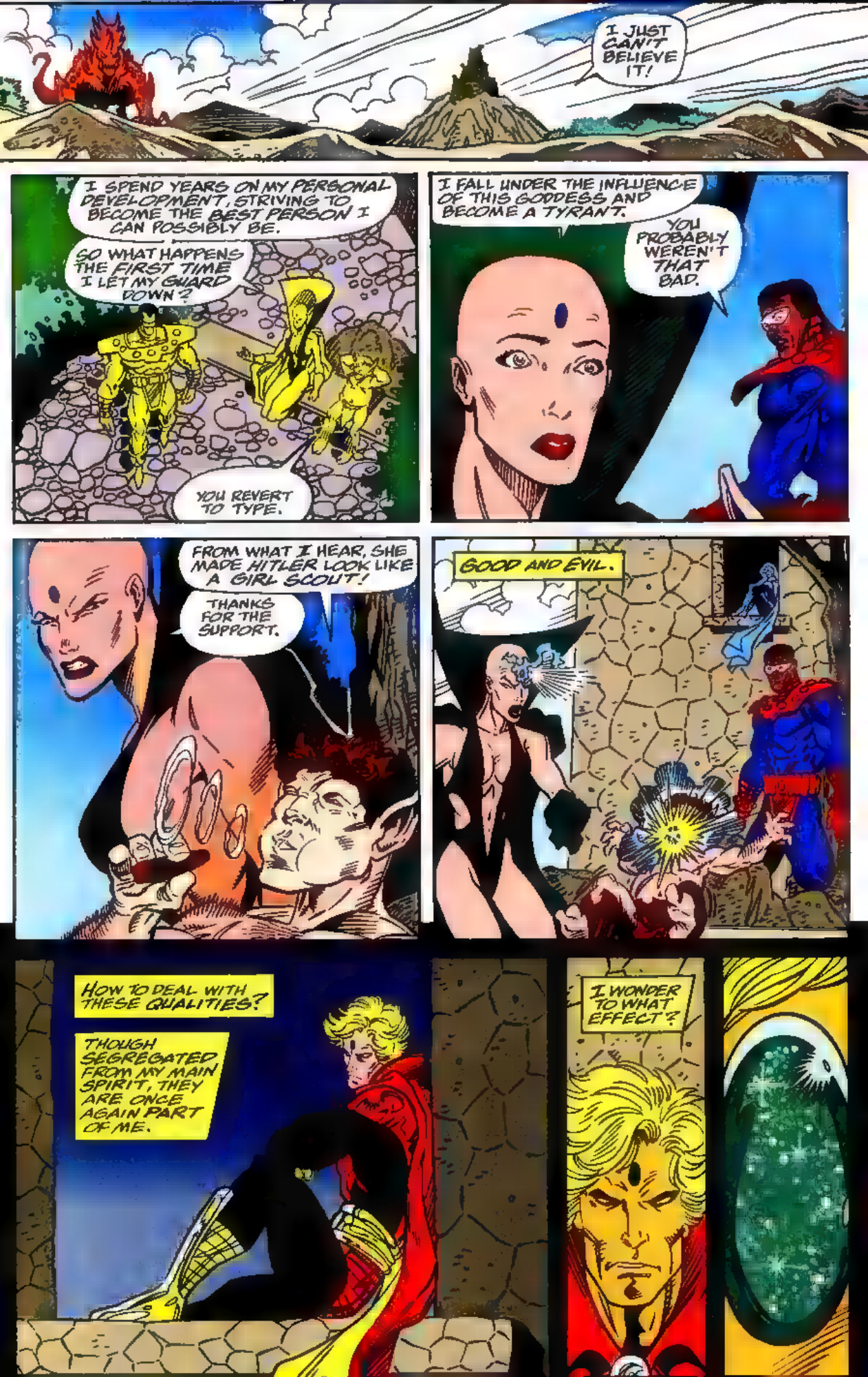
I SEEM TO REMEMBER YOU PROMISING MEPHISTO A COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNIT FOR ASSISTANCE RENDERED.
WON'T HE BE QUITE UPSET?
I SHALL DEAL WITH MEPHISTO WHEN THE TIME COMES.
YOU HAVE CHANGED GREATLY OF LATE, TITAN.
THROUGHOUT THIS AFFAIR YOU HAVE BEHAVED WITH HONOR.
WARLOCK, YOU ARE NOT TRYING TO PAINT ME THE HERO, ARE YOU?
AS ALWAYS, THANOS DID ACT IN A MANNER THAT WOULD BE MOST BENEFICIAL TO HIMSELF, NOTHING MORE.
BUT YOU DID FREELY DESTROY THE COSMIC EGG.
ONLY SO NO FOOL WOULD GAIN POSSESSION OF IT AND BECOME A NUISANCE.
ANYONE IN CONTROL OF THE COSMIC EGG WOULD SURELY PROVE MORE THAN JUST A MERE NUISANCE.
HARDLY.
AS YOU SO HANDILY POINTED OUT TO THE GODDESS, THE EGG IS FLAWED--NOT OMNIPOTENT.
WHICH IS WHY YOU CHOSE NOT TO CLAIM IT?
WHEN AND IF I NEXT SEEK TO DOMINATE THE UNIVERSE I WILL BE 100% CERTAIN OF NOT LETTING IT SLIP MY GRASP.
FARE THEE WELL UNTIL THEN, ADAM WARLOCK.
YES... UNTIL THEN.

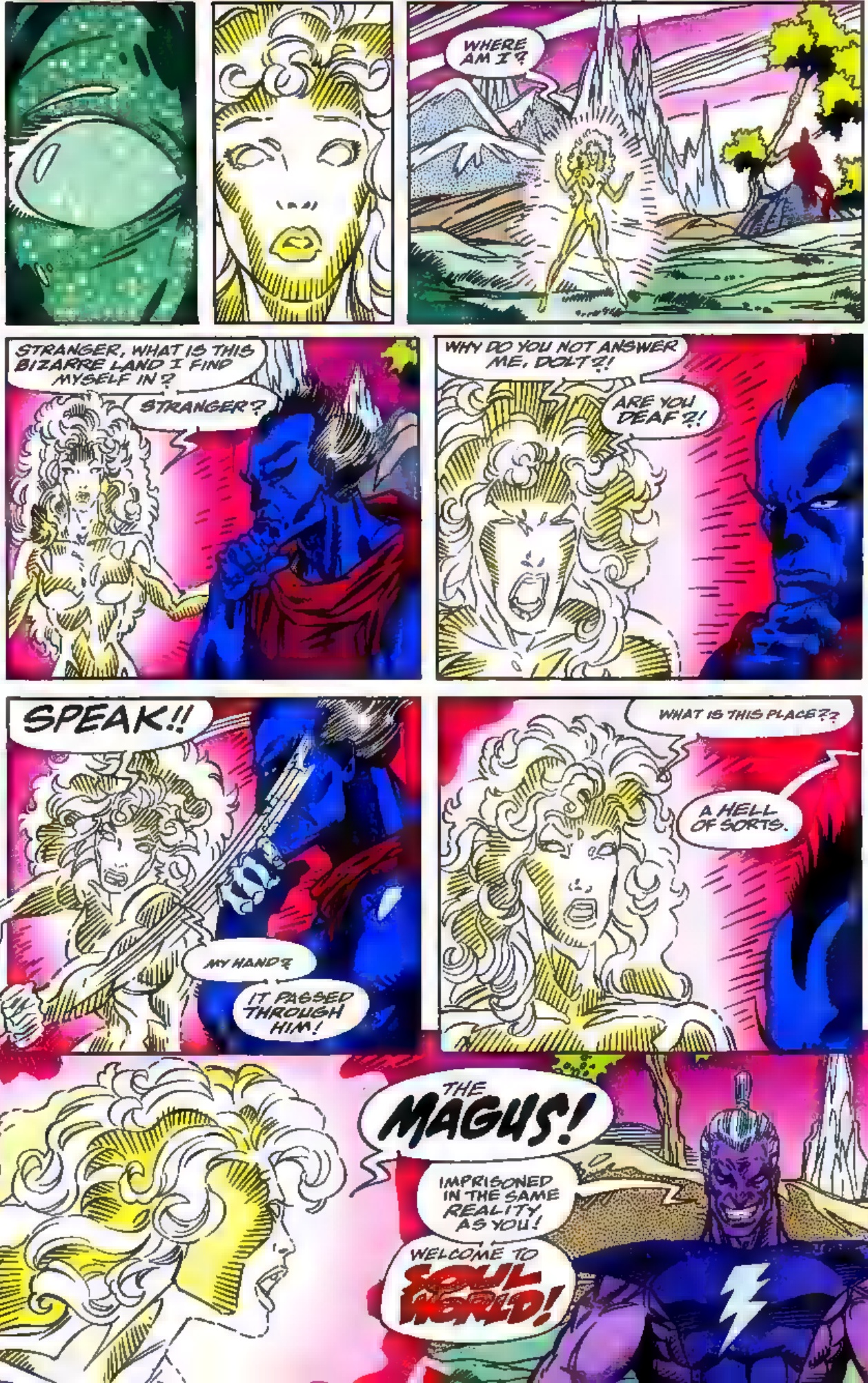
WELL, LOOK WHO DECIDED TO POP IN FOR A VISIT!
PROBABLY EXPECTING TO BE CONGRATULATED ON HIS VICTORY OVER THE GODDESS!
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE SHOWING YOUR FACE AROUND HERE!
YEAH!
EXCUSE ME.
YOUR GODDESS TAMPERED WITH SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE US ALL!
AND NEARLY DESTROYED THE UNIVERSE TO BOOT!
YOUR POINT?
THE WAY I HEAR IT, THIS GODDESS IS PART OF YOUR BEING, GOLDIE!
IN MY BOOK THAT MAKES YOU PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT CAME DOWN!
YOU MUSCLE-HEAD! ADAM COULDN'T CONTROL THE GODDESS'S ACTIONS!
BESIDES, HE MADE EVERYTHING RIGHT DIDN'T HE?
FACE IT, SHORTY, EVER SINCE WARLOCK CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD HE'S BROUGHT NOTHING BUT TROUBLE WITH HIM!
WHO YOU CALLING SHORTY?
PIP, GET US OUT OF HERE.
YOU GOT IT.

I SAY THIS GOLDEN CREEP DESERVES A GOOD--
THERE ARE QUESTIONS I WANT ANSWERED, AND WARLOCK IS--
HULK, DON'T!
--NEVER MIND.
AIN'T IT GREAT TO BE HOME?
I'VE BEEN CHEATED! I COULD'VE TAKEN THAT BIG OAF!
NOT ON YOUR BEST DAY, GAMORA!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT JUST HAPPENED BACK THERE.
OUR ALLIES SIMPLY REACTED IN A VERY HUMAN MANNER.
THE GATHERED HEROES HAD JUST SUFFERED THROUGH QUITE A HARROWING AND, TO THEM, INCOMPREHENSIBLE EXPERIENCE.
THE OUTCOME OF WHICH ALL THEIR HEROIC EFFORTS HAD VERY LITTLE EFFECT ON.
THEY WERE MERELY REDIRECTING THEIR FRUSTRATION TOWARD THE MOST CONVENIENT TARGET AVAILABLE.
MYSELF.
AIN'T IT GREAT BEIN' APPRECIATED?

SATURN'S MOON, TITAN.
HOW GOES IT, FRIEND FIRELORD?
I RETURN FROM A MOST UNUSUAL ADVENTURE EROS.
TELL ME, HOW FARED TITAN DURING THIS DIRE TIME?
FINE. NOTHING AMISS.
NOTHING?! BUT THE SURFER DID REPORT--
IN FACT IT'S BEEN TERRIBLY BORING AROUND HERE SINCE DRAX JOINED THE INFINITY WATCH.
PERHAPS I SHOULD PAY HIM A VISIT.
CARE TO JOIN ME?
INCREDIBLE! HE DOESN'T RECALL BEING ENTHRALLED BY THE GODDESS!
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT MOST PEOPLE HAVE WRITTEN OFF THEIR WITNESSING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE UNIVERSE AS SOME SORT OF HALLUCINATION OR DAYDREAM.
FROM WHAT I CAN ASCERTAIN NO ONE'S EVEN DISCUSSING THE MATTER.
THAT'S CRAZY!


NO, BRUCE, I THINK EVERYONE IS DESPERATELY SEEKING A WAY TO KEEP FROM GOING CRAZY.
WHAT OCCURRED IS MORE THAN MOST MINDS CAN FATHOM, TOO UNREAL.
IN OTHER WORDS WHAT WE'RE SEEING IS UNIVERSAL DENIAL. TO ACCEPT THE ACTUALITY OF WHAT THEY EXPERIENCED WOULD SHATTER MOST FOLKS' GRASP ON REALITY!
SO FOR NOW THE MEMORY IS SUPPRESSED.
FEW REMEMBER EXACTLY HOW CLOSE WE CAME TO THE END.
FEELING DOWN NOW THAT IT'S ALL OVER?
QUITE.
I LET THAT CHARLATAN PLAY WITH MY INNERMOST FEELINGS AND BETRAYED ALL THAT I HOLD DEAR.
NOT YOUR FAULT. THOSE WERE SOME MEAN MENTAL POWERS SHE HAD.
I STILL FEEL SO DIRTY... AND SO USED.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RESIST HER.
YOU DONE?
FROM THIS POINT ON BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS AND STOP BEATING UP ON YOURSELF!
OKAY?
THE GODDESS WAS THE BAD GUY IN THIS STORY... NOT THE FOLKS SHE HOODWINKED!
END OF SERMON.


I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
I SPEND YEARS ON MY PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, STRIVING TO BECOME THE BEST PERSON I CAN POSSIBLY BE.
SO WHAT HAPPENS THE FIRST TIME I LET MY GUARD DOWN?
YOU REVERT TO TYPE.
I FALL UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THIS GODDESS AND BECOME A TYRANT.
YOU PROBABLY WEREN'T THAT BAD.
FROM WHAT I HEAR, SHE MADE HITLER LOOK LIKE A GIRL SCOUT!
THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT.
GOOD AND EVIL.
HOW TO DEAL WITH THESE QUALITIES?
THOUGH SEGREGATED FROM MY MAIN SPIRIT, THEY ARE ONCE AGAIN PART OF ME.
I WONDER TO WHAT EFFECT?

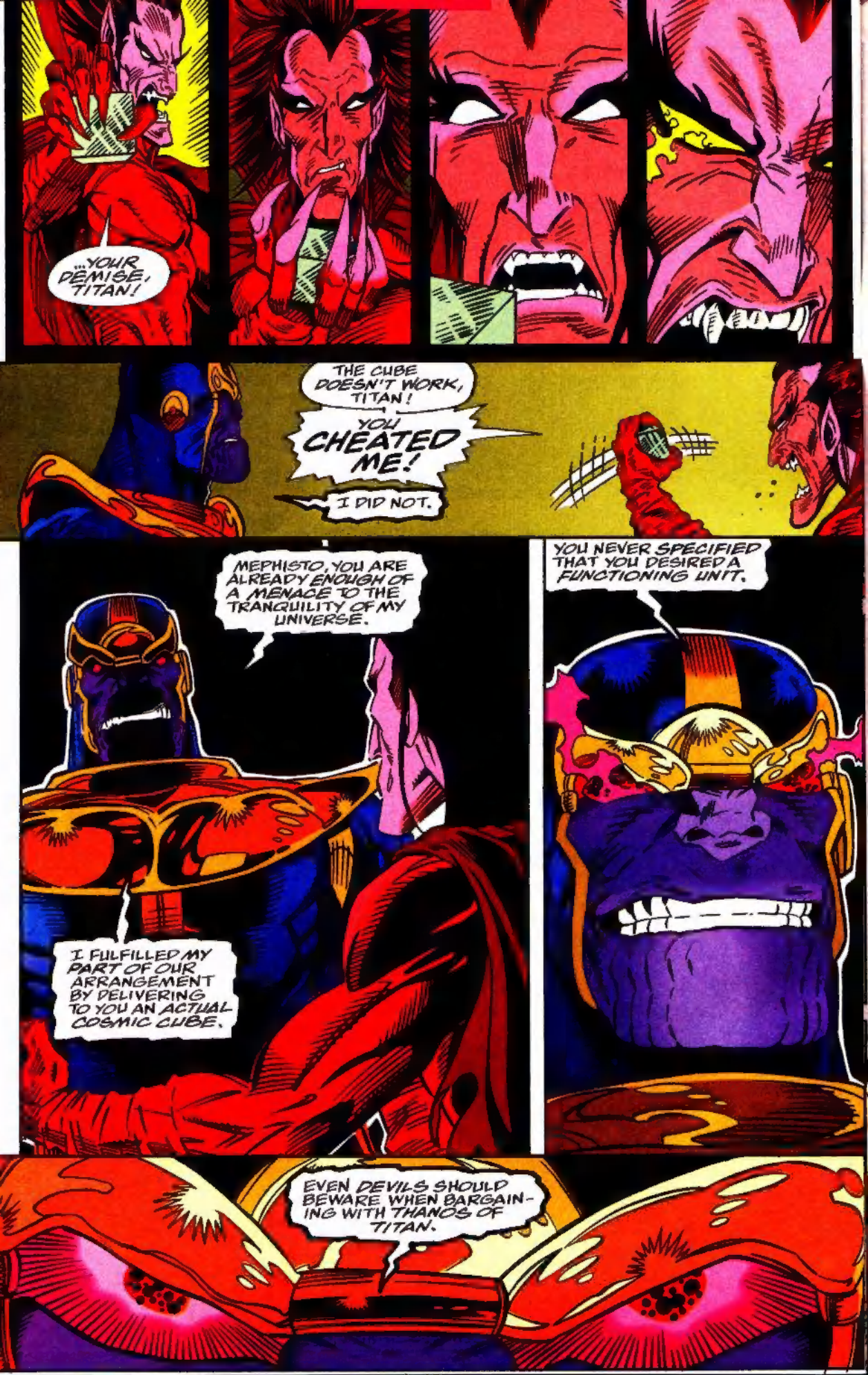

WHERE AM I?
STRANGER, WHAT IS THIS BIZARRE LAND I FIND MYSELF IN?
STRANGER?
WHY DO YOU NOT ANSWER ME, DOLT?!
ARE YOU DEAF?!
SPEAK!!
MY HAND?
IT PASSED THROUGH HIM!
WHAT IS THIS PLACE??
A HELL OF SORTS.
THE MAGUS!
IMPRISONED IN THE SAME REALITY AS YOU!
WELCOME TO SOUL HELL!

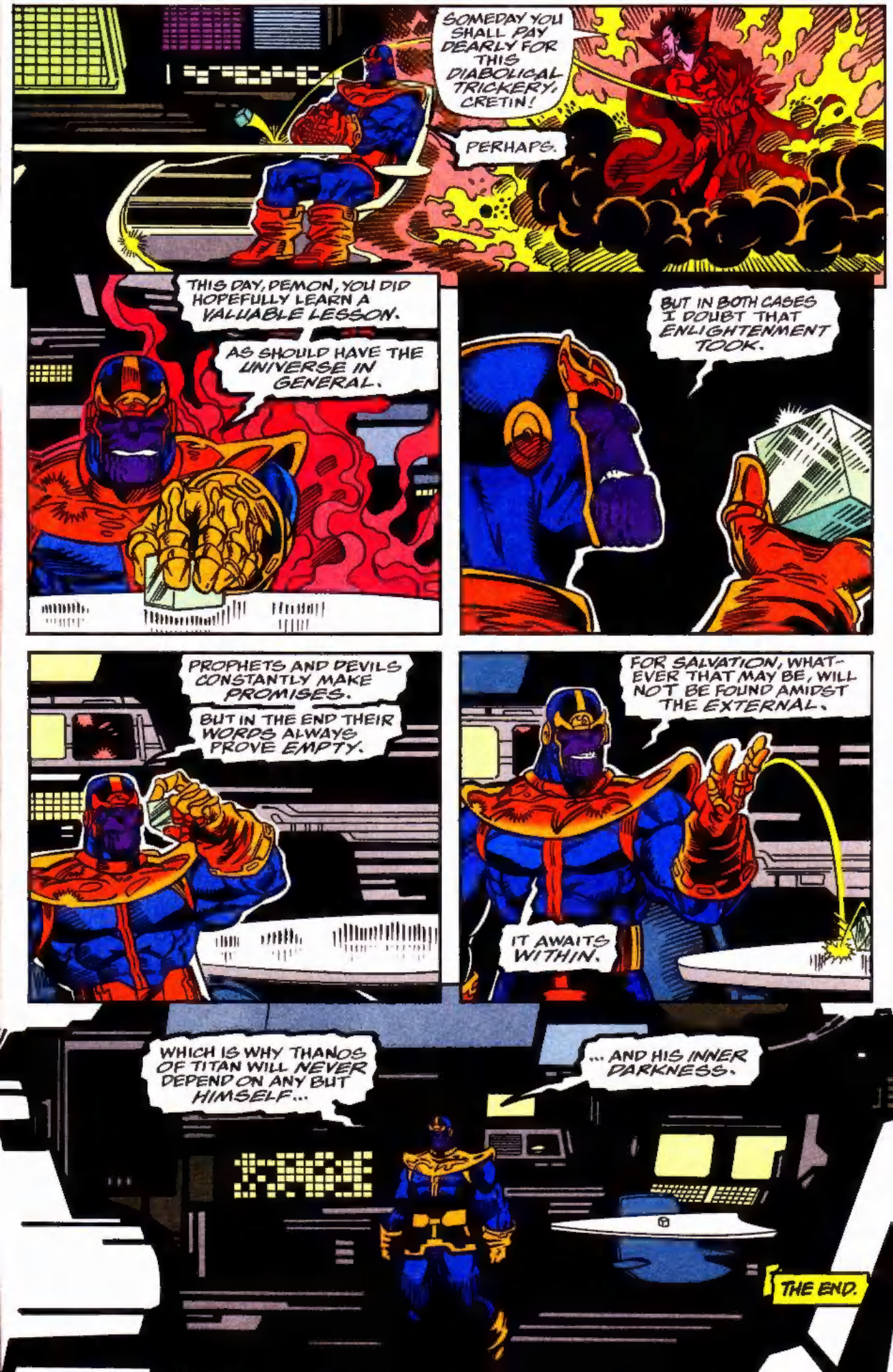
SADLY, YOU AND I ARE BUT FACETS OF A SOUL AND NOT FULL SPIRITS LIKE ALL OTHERS IN THIS REALM!
TO THEM WE ARE BUT PHANTOMS.
IMPOSSIBLE!
MAGUS, I KNOW YOU TO BE THE PRINCE OF DECEIVERS!
DO YOU TRULY EXPECT ME TO FALL FOR THIS VILE TRICK!?
DIE, LIAR!
YOU SPOKE THE TRUTH!
EVEN TO EACH OTHER WE ARE BUT GHOSTS.

NEW YORK CITY.
WELL, THIS IS ONE BANK ROBBERY THAT GOT CUT SHORT AND SWEET.
LOOKS LIKE ALL CROOKS GOING STRAIGHT UNDER THE GODDESS'S SWAY IS A THING OF THE PAST.
EVERYTHING'S BACK TO NORMAL.
TOO BAD.
AND ON THE BORDER OF ISRAEL AND LEBANON.
HALT!
LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS!

MEPHISTO.
I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
TITAN, YOU HAVE MY COSMIC CONTAINMENT UNIT?
WHAT OF THE OTHERS?
THEY ARE NO MORE.
LOST FOREVER.
THIS IS THE LAST COSMIC CUBE.

THE INFORMATION I PRESENTED YOU WITH WAS OF SOME HELP IN THWARTING THE GODDESS'S MAD AMBITIONS, I TAKE IT?
WE HAD A BARGAIN, TITAN.
I NOW EXPECT YOU TO LIVE UP TO YOUR END OF THAT DEAL.
I WOULD HAVE MY RIGHTFUL PROPERTY.
THANOS ALWAYS HONORS AN AGREEMENT.
THE COSMIC CUBE IS NOW MINE!
ANY WISH I IMAGINE BECOMES REALITY!
INCLUDING...


...YOUR DEMISE, TITAN!
THE CUBE DOESN'T WORK, TITAN!
YOU CHEATED ME!
I DID NOT.
MEPHISTO, YOU ARE ALREADY ENOUGH OF A MENACE TO THE TRANQUILITY OF MY UNIVERSE.
I FULFILLED MY PART OF OUR ARRANGEMENT BY DELIVERING TO YOU AN ACTUAL COSMIC CUBE.
YOU NEVER SPECIFIED THAT YOU DESIRED A FUNCTIONING UNIT.
EVEN DEVILS SHOULD BEWARE WHEN BARGAINING WITH THANOS OF TITAN.


SOMEDAY YOU SHALL PAY DEARLY FOR THIS DIABOLICAL TRICKERY, CRETIN!
PERHAPS.
THIS DAY, DEMON, YOU DID HOPEFULLY LEARN A VALUABLE LESSON.
AS SHOULD HAVE THE UNIVERSE IN GENERAL.
BUT IN BOTH CASES I DOUBT THAT ENLIGHTENMENT TOOK.
PROPHETS AND DEVILS CONSTANTLY MAKE PROMISES.
BUT IN THE END THEIR WORDS ALWAYS PROVE EMPTY.
FOR SALVATION, WHATEVER THAT MAY BE, WILL NOT BE FOUND AMIDST THE EXTERNAL.
IT AWAITS WITHIN.
WHICH IS WHY THANOS OF TITAN WILL NEVER DEPEND ON ANY BUT HIMSELF...
... AND HIS INNER DARKNESS.
THE END.